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# Balænarum Piscatio.

## CARMEN LATINUM,

CANCELLARII PRÆMIO DONATUM

ET

IN THEATRO SHELDONIANO RECITATUM,

DIE JUNII XVIII. M DCCC LXXIII.

AUCTORE

ALUREDO EDMUNDO PACKE,

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# Balænarum Piscatio.

"Miserable they!
Who here entangled in the gathering ice,
Take their last look of the descending sun."

THOMSON. *Winter*, *l.* 920.

QUÆ ratio mentes hominum Borealia regna
Visere, et ignotos hiemis penetrare recessus
Impellat, quantos pelagi perferre labores
Expediam: Vos audenti succurrite, Musæ,
Et dio incultos moderamine ducite versus!
Cum primum terras Curæ petiere rapaces
Atque Metus, casum Genitor miseratus iniquum
Respexit genus humanum, novaque addidit arma.
Demissæ cœlo Spes atque Audacia vires
Firmavere hominum, nempe ut devincere tantos

Sæpius auderent hostes, et pectore fixo
Speratam peterent adversa per omnia metam.
  Hoc freti auxilio vastæ sub rupibus Œtæ
Tercenti agminibus, duxit quot millia Medus,
Obstiterunt Graii; sic fronte Caractacus alta
Romani potuit contemnere vincla triumphi:
Barbarus haud aliter mirantes Hannibal Alpes
Vicit, et insolitis late juga terruit armis:
Sic quoque, dum virides amissæ Atlantidis oras*
Per mare quærebat vacuum, nova regna, Columbus,
Adversos ventos, obstructaque cærula musco
Prospicere immotus potuit, dubiosque suorum
Exhortari animos et debellare timorem.
Quin etiam, heroum gens haud indigna priorum,
Sic nostri immitis Boreæ perrumpere sedes,
Insolitoque audent sese committere ponto.
  Namque ubi semotam pelagi violentia Thulen
Verberat, et raucas semper quatit unda cavernas;
Ecce! ratis non una parat tentare procellas
Arctoi maris, atque Noto dat vela faventi.
Sol ruit et tacito conduntur in æquore terræ;
Extremi patriæ fines, quos illa recedens
Heu! nunquam nisi fracta cohors fortasse reviset:

* The ancient tradition of the Island of Atlantis beyond the pillars of Hercules, told in Plato's "Timæus," has been supposed to refer to a vague idea of the Continent of America.

At secura mali desertas prora per undas
Ocyus in Borean et Septem regna Trionum
Urget iter; jam demisso Sol flectitur arcu,
Et magis atque magis supra capita imminet Arctos.
Tum vero insolita cumulari mole profundum
Incipit, et tumidi glacie torpescere fluctus.
Cærulei apparent montes, passimque feruntur
Huc illuc, ubi ventus agat; cursuque sereno
Sæpius (haud miseris ignota pericula nautis)
Advecti inter se coeunt; it stridor ad auras,
Horrescensque pater refluit Neptunus, et imo
Excutitur fundo, longeque remurmurat unda.
At nautæ contorta modis fastigia miris
Mirantur, nitidisque impendere rupibus arces
Turrigerasque domos; stant puro mœnia vitro,
Qualis cæruleo pallescit lumine Nerei
Regia, vel quali se turbida prodit ab antro
Arviris, tumido quum præceps amne sonantem
Desilit in vallem, et dilectæ jungitur Arvæ.
Hæc inter, Thetidis pecus innumerabile, ceti
Ludere balænæque solent, lateque per altum
Curibus exsultant variis, aut spumea vasta
Cærula mole secant, aut summis sæpe quieti
Fluctibus incumbunt et raro Sole fruuntur.
Quos procul e pelago nautæ, exoptata laborum
Præmia, conspiciunt; læto fremit omne tumultu
Concilium: pars arma parant, amentaque longis

Adjungunt jaculis: solito pars ordine remos
Ponere, et in pontum pergunt demittere cymbas.
In medio dux ipse, sagax, operæque peritus,
Cuique suum legit officium, certoque cohortem
Imperio cohibet: ruit altas cymba per undas,
Incumbunt remis juvenes, et verbere crebro
Nituntur, stridens circum rescinditur æquor.
Ipse gubernator puppim tenet, et notat auras
Cautus, et a vento proram detorquet euntem
In latus adversum tendens, ne garrulus aer
Forte sonum prodat, vigilantemque excitet hostem,
Optatumque viris ipso in discrimine honorem
Invidus eripiat: jacet ingens æquore corpus
Securum ignarumque mali, ceu vasta carina
Quam nautæ fractam, magna incumbente procella
Deseruere mari medio: post, quum mala cessit
Vis hiemis, placidas incustodita per undas
Labitur huc illuc, vacuum atque ignobile lignum,
Quo pelagus Zephyrique vocent. Sic mole videtur
Ingenti, oppresso sic monstrum incumbere ponto.
Jamque iter emensæ diverso ex æquore cymbæ
Adveniunt: instat prora jaculator in alta,
Et circum lecti comites, quis flectere navem
Officium, et jaculo suffixum evolvere funem.
Ipse, æstum nactus facilem fluctumque tumentem,
Nititur intendens ictu, telumque coruscat:
Evolat adducto stridens hastile lacerto,

Hæretque infixum lateri, quo vulnere inertes
Commotæ monstri vires, grandesque per artus
It tremor. Ætnæo sic forte in litore pastor
Sub pedibus trepidare solum, fessumque moveri
Enceladum sentit, timidusque in vota precesque
Cogitur. Immani extemplo balæna tumultu
Volvitur, et mediis mittit se vasta sub undis,
Ima petens, dirum effugiat si forte periclum
Secreto celata mari, barathrisque profundis:
Demens, at lateri non evitabile telum
Infixum cum fune manet, sequiturque ruentem.
Ferte undam, O socii, citius! funemque rotantem
Tingite, ne rapido revolubilis ardeat æstu!
Stridens ille volat: sed tandem, ubi nacta recessus
Optatos medio fugiens balæna profundo,
Sistit iter, tacitoque diu sub gurgite torpet
Solaturque gravem multum indignata dolorem.
  Tum cymbæ vigiles vario sese ordine circum
Instruere et reditum monstri expectare latentis,
Cum tandem studium carpendæ lucis et auræ
Suaserit exhaustum superas se reddere ad undas.
Ergo iterum in lucem tumido de vortice surgit
Omnia tuta ratum; sed inevitabilis hostis
Imminet heu! surgenti, atque ingerit acrius arma.
  Altera jam lateri crudelis inhæret arundo.
Ingentemque alte bibit acri cuspide vitam.

Inde aliæ accedunt aliæque, et turbine nigro
Plurima non vanis demissa hastilia dextris.
  Ipsa diu solitis rursus balæna latebris
Conata infandam nequicquam evadere pestem
In medio moribunda jacet, cæcoque furore
Sævit, et ingenti tundit spumantia cauda
Æquora: diffugiunt reboantque sub ictibus undæ.
  Ah! ne infelicem diro sic verbere cymbam
Forte premat! quippe horribili tunc omnia in altum
Exitio raperet citius, nautasque ratemque
Spargeret, et celeri perituros mergeret æstu.
  Tum vero largum mixto cum sanguine fluctum
Naribus effundit, volvitque ad sidera pontum.
Sicut inaccessæ niveis sub rupibus Heclæ
Exultat quoties calidis fons plurimus undis,
Æstuat exesi magno cum murmure montis,
Stridetque erumpens late, nebulaque madentem
Involvit fervente polum, rursusque residens
Decidit, et fundo se lympha recolligit imo.
Haud aliter salsos attollit in æthera nimbos,
Sanguineam exspirans animam, rabiemque supremam
Balæna, et moriens vasto maria ore resorbet:
Exsilit horrendo glomeratus vortice pontus.
  Interea monstro jaculis non segnius hostes
Semianimi incumbunt, telisque frequentibus instant.
Plurimus ingenti manat de vulnere sanguis,
Purpureoque rubet late sub flumine Nereus

Jam magni trepidant artus, jam lentius imber
Naribus ejicitur, solitæque in corpore vires
Deficiunt: frustra languens violentia membris
Exardet paulatim et vana resuscitat arma:
Frustra immane furens extrema in morte tumultum
Ingentem ciet, et sub cauda conterit æquor.
Conanti ulterius non eluctabilis obstat
Somnus, et æterna clauduntur lumina nocte.
  Lætantes juvenes obitum, atque rigentia leto
Membra notant, tum vastum adjecto fune cadaver
Protinus ad navem ducunt; it clamor ad auras
Ætherias: crebroque sonat victoria plausu.
Ingens attrahitur spolium, laterique carinæ
Jungitur, affixo vergit sub pondere navis.
  Tum nautis studium partiri corpus, et omnes
Accingunt acres operi: pars tergora latis
Deripiunt costis, atque ora immensa recludunt:
Pars olei latices, et flumen amabile flammis
Ossibus expromunt: unus labor occupat omnes.
  Post ubi sepositæ exuviæ, brevis hora quieti
Traditur, alter enim mox hostis in altera fessos
Bella vocat; tum non requiem neque grata capessunt
Otia, sed repetunt cymbam et nova prælia tentant.
  Sic ergo incertam multo in discrimine vitam
Exercent, at tandem ubi Solem Libra recepit,
Arduaque in cœlo surgentis stella Capellæ
Præmonet Auctumnum et venientia frigora brumæ:

Rursus ad Australes undas, et regna diei
Advertunt proram, et Boreæ dant vela secundo.
Desuper exuviæ, et tanti monumenta triumphi
Antennas circum pendent, ingentiaque ossa.
Quæque, puellaris donum haud inamabile dextræ,*
Abstulerant quondam patrio de litore nautæ,
Multa coronatam circumvolitantia puppim,
Serta susurrantis crepitant sub flamine venti.
Olli lætitia tandem super æquora vecti
Optatos portus, sociosque, Laresque revisunt
Desertasque diu uxores, dulcique fruuntur
Colloquio: juvat exactos memorare labores
Et quantum subiere mali, juvat ardua tutos
In terra revocare animo discrimina ponti;
Ærumnæ nil restat adhuc nisi inanis imago,
Exhaustæ patrio moriuntur in aere curæ.
Felix! cui reditus datus exactoque labore
Tandem parta quies. Ah si sic omnibus esset
Certa salus! tum non toties mœstissima conjux.
Et pueri, et divom supplex ad limina mater
Plorarent juvenem absentem, quem pontus iniquus

* See Norna's rhyme in "The Pirate," ch. 21, and notes there:—
"The breeze from Shetland blows fair and soft,
And gaily the garland is fluttering aloft.
Seven good fishes have spouted their last,
And the jawbones are hanging from yard to mast."

Heu! nunquam patriis rediturum arcebat arenis;
Cumque hominum vitis pensarent corpora cetûm*
Ventum exsecrati, pelagusque, infestaque nautis
Sidera; et assiduis placarent numina votis.
Sæpe, procellosus quum sidera condidit Eurus
Et late resonant longi per litora fluctus,
Sola domo vigilat, deserto nympha cubilí,
Ipsa animo comitata virum, dum personat aures
Nocturni maris ira, canunt et funera venti.
Et lacrymis intenta deos, precibusque fatigat.
Tum, si grata quies oculos et munera somni
Forte deo miserante premunt, solvuntque dolorem,
Conjugis absentis sub nocte recurrit imago,
Quantus et qualis erat, lectoque instare videtur:
Illa preces faciles, et inania fundere verba
Nequicquam in somnis, et noto brachia collo
Injicere, optatæque frui dulcedine formæ.
Ipse tamen, longe patria sponsaque remotus,
Clauditur Arctoi glaciali in carcere ponti,
Infelix, hieme et ventis detentus iniquis.
Jamque aliæ rediere rates, portuque tenentur:
Una manet tamen, immiti data victima brumæ.

* Comp. the Scotch song:—

"Wives and mothers most despairing
Call them lives of men."

And "Antiquary." Chap. xi.

Stant late freta fixa gelu, fluctusque ruentem
Cæruleis proram circumvenere catenis.
Nec potis elabi ulterius: rigor undique regnat
Durus, et extincto torpescunt æquora motu.
Tum neque dulce jubar Phœbi, neque tæda diei
Desertas radiis genialibus excitat oras:
Sol ipse, effugiens glacies et inhospita regna
Auratum nigro detorsit ab æthere currum,
Perpetuaque gravis Nox omnia contegit umbra.
Solum illic multo florescens sidere cœlum,
Aut Ignis tremulo Borealis lumine terras
Candentes late ostendit, glaciemque patentem.
Scilicet incerta sic, credo, horrescere luce
Lugentes Erebi campos, Acherontiaque arva
Dicuntur, sic nocte tegi, luctuque silenti.
Vix sonitus, nisi cum sævis ululatibus ursi
Devinctam lustrant navem, prædamque futuram
Exspectant: frustra interea devincere frigus
Inclusi nautæ, et glacialia solvere vincla
Contendunt: magis atque magis vis horrida brumæ
Incumbit miseris, jam victæ in corpore vires
Deficiunt, fessos sopor irresolubilis artus
Præcursor mortis lente premit, haud sine cœli
Numine, sic Genitor somnis et imagine grata
Mulcet, et extremas miseratus temperat horas.
Nempe omnis nebulæ similis, de mentibus angor
Cedit, et obliti curarum, hiemisque, gelusque

Forsitan ante obitum patriam, notosque videntur
In somnis adiisse Lares, gratumque suorum
Excipere alloquium reduces, et conjugis inter
Amplexus placidæ tandem succumbere morti.
Non aliter quoties deserta per arida Nili
Sæpe viatori fontes et amœna vireta
Apparent procul, et ficta dulcedine fallunt;
Illum accedentem citius cupidumque fruendi
Ridet et in latas se silva resolvit arenas,
Sic animis patriæ dilecta resurgit imago,
Vanaque supremo diffundit gaudia somno.
  Ignoti pereunt; humilis manus addita cœtu
Heroum, Boreæ semotis quotquot arenis
Collectos inter proceres in morte silenti
Occumbunt: qualis gelidum qui primus in æquor*
Audax egit iter, fragilique invadere cymba
Frigora non timuit; sed non temeraria virtus
Eripere audentem leto, patriæque referre
Evaluit; nec non qui summa in morte triumphans†

* Sir Hugh Willoughby in 1553 reached 73° N. Lat., and was frozen to death with his crew.

"Such was the Briton's fate,
As with first prow (what have not Britons dared!)
He for the passage sought, attempted since
So much in vain."—*Thomson. Winter, l.* 926.

† Sir John Franklin.

Optatum confecit opus, portasque Favoni
Perrupit: nunquam heu! patriæ quod fecerat ipse,
Narraturus iter. Quis tantorum immemor exstat
Factorum, aut vestrum meritos ignorat honores,
Illustres animæ? Stant laus et fama perennis!
Attamen hos inter non immemorata peribit
Illa cohors, humilesve prement oblivia nautas;
Quis satis, insana procul ambitione solutis,
Officio fungi proprio, tenuemque laborem
Summus honor per damna sequi quæcunque, nec ipsam
Munere in exiguo dubitare expendere vitam.
Sicut enim, quoties ardentem Oriona circum
Aureus astrorum globus, innumeræque refulgent
Lumine subducto nebulæ, tum maxima cœli
Gloria fit, parvique micant mirandius ignes;
Sic humili solio splendet clarissima virtus.
Ergo auctumnales quum circum tecta procellæ
Nocte super media reboant, quum lætior intus
Aula nitet, dulcique domus composta quiete est:
Tum grave certamen ponti, tantæque pericla
Militiæ meminisse decet, parvamque cohortem,
Ignotos cetorum hostes, quos impia venti
Fert rabies, Nereique tenet variabilis unda.
Tum votis numen colere, et cœleste precari
Auxilium, quoniam una salus discrimine tanto,
Quum vigor, et vires hominum, atque audacia victa
Cesserunt tandem, atque intendunt omnia mortem,

Te, Genitor venerande, penes, tua dextera tantum
Præsidium est: sic tu, neque enim te cura tuorum
Effugiet, præsens adsis, et numine fausto
Neglectæ miserere manus; humilesque tuere
Heroas, veræ obscuros virtutis alumnos!

Alden's Printing Works, Oxford.